

The Creed of the Pious Predecessors and the People of Narrations

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Translation and Footnotes by Abu Yahya

CONTENTS

The Introduction.....	
The School of the Predecessors in the Attributes of Allah.....	
The Quran is the Speech of Allah.....	
The Rising.....	
The Descending and Coming of the Lord.....	
Adherence to the Sunnah and the leaving the Innovations.....	
Belief in The Last Day.....	
The Intercession of the Prophet (pbuh).....	
Belief in the Pool, <i>al-Kawthar</i> and the People of Paradise and the People of the Fire.....	
The Believers will see their Lord in the Hereafter.....	
The infinite duration of Paradise and Hell.....	
The Reality of Faith [Speech and Action].....	
The Believer is not Apostated with the Major sin.....	
The Ruling of leaving the Prayer Intentionally.....	
The Deeds of the Slaves are Created.....	
The Guidance and The Straying is with the Will of Allah.....	
The Decree and The Predestination.....	
The Evil is not attributed to Allah.....	
Affirmation of The Will of Allah.....	
Allah (SWT) is Pleased with Faith and Hates Disbelief and Sin.....	
Avoiding the Judgement of a certain person entering Paradise and the Fire.....	
Whoever dies upon Islam his Final Outcome is Paradise and whoever dies upon Disbelief his Final Outcome is the Fire.....	
The Ones that were given the glad tidings of Paradise.....	
The Best of the Companions and their Caliphate.....	
The Prayer behind the Righteous and the Evil Imam and <i>al-Jihaad</i> alongside with them..	

The Stance of <i>Ahl al-Sunnah</i> regarding what broke out between the Companions.....	
Entry into Paradise by Allah’s Virtue and His Mercy.....	
Every created thing has an Appointed Term.....	
Whispering of the Devils.....	
Magic and Magicians.....	
Prohibition of Alcoholic Beverages and Safeguarding the Prayers.....	
The Enjoinment of one another to Good Deeds.....	
Hatred of the People of Innovation.....	
The Characteristics of the People of Innovation.....	
The Characteristics of <i>Ahl al-Sunnah</i>	

The Introduction

All Praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, the final outcome is for the pious, and may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon Muhammad, and upon all of his family and his Companions.

To Proceed:

When I arrived at *Aamol*¹ in *Tabaristaan* and *Jailaan*, whilst intending to visit the Sacred House of Allah and to visit the grave of His prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his noble Companions – my brothers in Islam asked me to compile for them parts from the fundamentals of the Religion, which was adhered to by those who preceded – from the Imams of the Religion, the scholars of the Muslims, and the Pious Predecessors. Those who guided and called the people towards it at all times, prohibited [them] from what opposed all that which contradicted the body of the truthful pious believers; who assisted in its adherence, showed hostility [toward those who went against] it. They heresized and apostated those who believed in other than this [creed]. They obtained for themselves and for those who they called towards it – its blessing, its sanctity and its goodness. They attained the reward of their creed for what they put forward for it, for their adherence to it, for guiding the worshippers towards it, and their bearing of it.

So, I sought Allah's guidance and put down in writing in this section a little from it² for abridgement, hoping that it benefits those of intelligence and insight. Allah (SWT) actualizes the hope and abundantly bestows upon us blessings with success, and uprightness upon the path of the right-course and the truth, with His blessings and His kindness.

¹ *Aamol* is a famous city in *Tabaristaan*. This word ends with the letter "*dbal*" in two transcripts. It is possible that it has been changed from ending with the letter "*laam*" to the letter "*dbal*".

² Meaning, from the Creed of the Pious Predecessors [TN]

The School of the Predecessors in the Attributes of Allah

I say and with Allah is the success:

Indeed the People of Narrations are adherents of the Book and the *Sunnah* – may Allah protect their living and have mercy upon their dead. They testify for Allah (SWT) the oneness and they testify for the Prophet (pbuh) the message and the prophethood. They know their Lord (SWT) by His Attributes which He spoke about them in His inspiration and His revelation or by what the Prophet (pbuh) testified for Him, which came upon authentic reports and what the trust-worthies and the reliable ones transmitted from him. They affirm for Him (SWT) what He affirmed for Himself in His book or upon the tongue of His messenger (pbuh).

They do not believe in likening His Attributes with the attributes of His creation, so they say: Indeed He created Adam with His Hand.

As He (SWT) specified in His saying – the One glorified from all defects –: **“(Allah) said: ‘O Iblees [Satan]! What prevented you from prostrating yourself to one whom I have created with Both My Hands?’”** [Sad: 75]

They do not distort words from its places by carrying the meaning of ‘The Two Hands’ as ‘two blessings’ or ‘two powers’ [as the] distortion of *al-Muta’zila* and *al-Jahmiyyah* – may Allah destroy them! They do not ask about the howness of them with the [question: ‘How are like?’] Nor do they make them equal with the hands of the created [as the] anthropomorphization³ of *al-Mushabbihah* – may Allah forsake them!

Allah (SWT) has saved *Ahl al-Sunnah* from the distortions, the asking of the how’s and the anthropomorphization. He has blessed them with knowledge and understanding⁴ until they entered upon the path of *al-Tawheed* and *al-Tanzeeh*⁵. They have left the sayings [entailing] negations and likening but [simply] followed the saying of Allah (SWT): **“There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.”** [Ash-Shura: 11] [They followed] just as it came in the Quran with the mention of the Two Hands like in His saying: **“...whom I have created with Both My Hands?”** [Sad: 75] and His saying, **“Nay, both His Hands are widely outstretched.”** [Al-Maeda: 64]

[Likewise] in the authentic reports of the Prophet (pbuh) that has come with the mentioning of the Hand such as in the report regarding the dispute between Musa (as) Adam (as), in his saying to him: *“Allah created you with His Hand and made the angels prostate to you...”*.

³ Meaning, ascription of human characteristics to Allah (SWT) [TN]

⁴ In Arabic: *“ta’reef wa taf’heem”* Shaykh Rabee’ al-Madkhali explained the two words as translated – Allah knows best [TN]

⁵ Meaning, “deanthropomorphism” – in other words, elimination of human characteristics from the concept of deity (Allah SWT) [TN]

Likewise in his saying (pbuh), [as hadith qudsi], *“I did not create righteous decedents who I created with My Two Hands like the one to whom I said, “Be!” and he was...”*

Also in his saying (pbuh): *“Allah created al-Firdous with His Hand.”*

They say [the same] for all the Attributes which the Quran descended with its mention, and which came with the authentic reports [such as] the Hearing, the Seeing, the Eyes, the Face, the Knowledge, the Omnipotence, the Might, the Majesty, the Will, the Decree, the Speech, the Words, the Pleasure, the Discontent, the Love, the Hate, the Joy, the Laughter and other than these attributes without anthropomorphization to anything from that with the attributes of the created. Rather they sanctify them by what Allah (SWT) and the His messenger (pbuh) said, without increasing upon them, without any annexation to them, without [asking any] howness about them, without any anthropomorphization, without any distortion, without any alteration, without any change, without taking them out from its context – in which the Arab understood them and laid it down – [and] attaching to them unknown interpretation that is disproved. They implement the text upon its apparent meaning, entrusting its knowledge to Allah (SWT) and they acknowledge that no one knows their explanation except Allah. Just as Allah informed about those who are firmly grounded with knowledge – that indeed they say, in His saying (SWT): **“And those who are grounded in knowledge say: ‘We believe in it; the whole of it [clear and unclear verses] are from our Lord.’ And none receive admonition except men of understanding.”** [Aali-Imraan, 7] They refrain from what is other than that.

The verses of the Book and the authentic radiant clear reports of the Prophet (pbuh) with these Attributes and other than them are many. The book will lengthen by its enumeration and the mention of the agreement of the Imams of the religion and its scholars upon the authenticity of these mentioned reports for it. Most of the reports are extracted with authentic chains [from a] book called: *Al-Intesaar*. Our condition at the beginning of this book was to make it abridged, and confine to the minimum without increasing upon it with the narration of reports and mentioning of its authentic chains of narrations, as stated so by the carriers of the reports and the compliers of the large authentic *masaaneed*⁶

⁶ Compilations of hadeeth according to the Companions' names [TN]

The Quran is the Speech of Allah

The People of Narrations testify and believe that the Quran is Allah's Speech, His book, His address [to His slaves], His inspiration, and His revelation [which is] not created. The one who says that it is created and believes in that; he is [considered] a disbeliever with them. The Quran is the Speech of Allah and His revelation; it is which Jibreel (as) who brought it down upon the Messenger (pbuh) as the Arabic Quran, to a people who possesses understanding, [a message containing] glad-tiding and warning, as Allah, the Glorified said, **“And truly this, [the Quran] is a revelation of the Lord of the *Alameen*. Which the trustworthy Spirit [Jibreel] has brought down upon your heart [O Mohammad] that you may be [one] of the warners. In the plain Arabic language.”** [As-Shuara: 192 -195]

He (pbuh) conveyed it to his nation as he was commanded to do so, [due to] His saying (SWT): **“O Messenger [Muhammad]! Proclaim [the message] which has been sent down to you from your Lord...”** [Al-Maeda: 67]

So he conveyed to them His Speech by the order of Allah (SWT), and in regarding that he (pbuh) said: *“Are you stopping me from conveying the Speech of my Lord!”*

It is that which the hearts memorize, that which the tongues recite, and that which is written in the scriptures [*masaahif*], no matter how it may be read by its reader, pronounced by its pronouncer, or how it may be memorised by its memorizer. Whether it is recited or is written in the scriptures of people of Islam or in writing boards of the their youth or in anything other than it; all of this is the Speech of Allah (SWT), and it is the Quran itself, in which we say, – indeed it is not created – so whoever believes that it is created then he is a disbeliever in Allah, the Great.

Ibn Khuzaymah said: *“The Quran is the Speech of Allah which is not created. So whoever said that the Quran is created – then he is a disbeliever in Allah, the Great. His testimony is not accepted, he is not visited if he falls sick, he is not prayed over if he dies, nor is he buried in the graveyards of the Muslim. He is requested to repent, if he does not repent, then he is killed”.*

As for the utterance of the Quran, – Shaykh Abu Bakr Al-Isamaa'eeley Al-Jarjaaney mention in his letter, which he wrote for the people of Jailaan [saying]: *“Whoever believed that the utterance of the Quran is created, he intends by it the Quran – [by this] then he has ultimately said that the Quran is created”.*

Ibn Mah'dee at-Tabaree in his book *“Al-I'teqaad”* which he wrote for the people of this country [saying]: *“Indeed the saying of the school of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jmaa'ah is that the Quran is the Speech of Allah (SWT), His inspiration, His revelation, His command and His prohibition, is not created. Whoever said it is created, then he is a disbeliever in Allah, the Great. The Quran in our hearts is memorized, and it is read upon our tongues, and it is written in our scriptures – it is the Speech of Allah which Allah (SWT) spoke with. Whoever said the Quran with my utterance is created or my utterance of the Quran is created, then he is an ignorant misguided disbeliever in Allah, the Great”.*

I mentioned this section in itself from the book of Ibn Mah'dee for my approval of that from him, indeed he followed the Predecessors – the People of the Narrations – in what he mentioned

[despite] with his deep penetration in speculative theology, his vast literary works in it and [despite] his lead and his surpass amongst his people.

[When Ishaq bin Ibrahim was asked about the utterance of the Quran], he said: *"It does not befit one to dispute about this, the Quran is the Speech of Allah which is not created."*

Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Jareer at-Tabari – may Allah have mercy on him – in his book: *'Al-Itiqaad'* – which he authored in this issue, he said: *"As for the saying regarding the utterances of the Quran from the slaves – we do not know any narration for it from a Companion or a Successor, except from whom [we find] in his speech prosperity and remedy, and in his following [we find] guidance and direction, and whose speech stands in the position of the earlier Imams. That is Abu Abdullah Ahmad bin Hanbal – may Allah have mercy on him; Abu Ismaeel At-Tirmidhi said: 'I heard Abu Abdullah bin Hanbal – may Allah have mercy on him – saying: 'The utterance of the Quran is created is the belief of the Jahmiyyah. Allah (SWT) said, "...than grant him protection, so that he may hear the Word of Allah..." [At-Taubah, 6] – He then said: 'So from whom will he listen!'"*

He said: *"Then I heard a group of our companions; I did not memorize their names, they all reported from Imam Ahmad – may Allah have mercy on him – he was saying: 'Whoever said that the utterance of the Quran is created, then he is a Jahmi and whoever said that it is not created, then his is an innovator.'"*

Muhammad bin Jareer said: *"We do not have any saying regarding this which allows us to say other than his saying. There is no Imam comparable to him. He is enough and sufficient and Imam to be followed – may Allah have mercy on him and may His pleasure be upon him."* These are the words of Muhammad ibn Jareer which I transferred here from the book, *'Al-Itiqaad'* – which he authored.

I say, he – with that I mean Muhammad bin Jareer, certainly excluded for himself from all that he was attributed with, accused of being away from the path of *Sunnah* or being inclined to some innovations.

That which he narrated from Ahmad – may Allah be pleased with him and gratify him – that the utterance of the Quran is created is the belief of *al-Jahmiyyah*, and it is authentically from him. He certainly said that because Jahm and his companions were speaking out explicitly about the Quran being created.

Those who said that the utterance of the Quran is created, advanced gradually by this to the saying that the Quran is created because they feared *Ahl as-Sunnah* in that time period, and thus were prevented from openly declaring that the Quran being created.

They wrapped it by this saying, containing ambiguity – so as not to be counted amongst the group of Jahm, who are the devils amongst the mankind. They inspire each other to ornamented speech and deception. They mentioned this wording and intended by it that the Quran with our utterance of is created, and because of this Ahmad – may Allah mercy on him – still called them *"Jahmiyyah"*. Also it is reported from him that he said: *"Those who say that the utterance of the Quran is created, are more evil than al-Jahmiyyah."*

As for what Muhammad bin Jareer narrated from Ahmad – may Allah have mercy on him – is that: *“Whoever said that the utterance of the Quran is not created, then he is an innovator.”* And what he meant by this is that the Pious Predecessors from *Ahl as-Sunnah* did not speak about this issue about the utterance of the Quran, there was no need for them to talk about it.

This innovation of speech in the utterance of the Quran is from the rationalists, possessors of stupidity – who came with the innovations and looked into things which they were prevented from; issues in misguidance from the straight path and the blameworthiness in speculative theology. They penetrated in things that the Predecessors from the scholars of Islam did not concern themselves with.

So Imam Ahmad said that this saying in itself is an innovation. It is incumbent upon the pious to leave it and [likewise leave] every innovation of an innovator. This innovation should not be uttered, or anything similar to it from the innovation of the innovator. It is confined to what the Predecessors said and what the Imams who followed them said: The Quran is the Speech of Allah which is not created. They did not increase upon this except to apostate those who said that it is created.

Abdullah bin Al-Mubaarak – may Allah have mercy on him – said: *“Whoever disbelieved in a single letter from the Quran, then has certainly disbelieved – meaning by it the Quran; whoever says: ‘I don’t believe in the letter ‘laam’.’ – then he certainly has disbelieved.”*

The Rising

The People of Narrations believe and testify that Allah (SWT) is above the seven heavens over His Throne as Allah (SWT) mentioned in His book in His saying in Surah Yunus: **“Surely, your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days and then Istawa [rose over] the Throne [really in a manner that suits His Majesty]...”** [Yunus: 3] His saying in Surah Ar-Rad: **“Allah is Who raised the heavens without any pillars that you can see. Then, He Istawa [rose over] the Throne [really in a manner that suits His Majesty]...”** [Ar-Rad: 2] His saying in Surah Al-Furqan: **“Then, He Istawa [rose over] the Throne [really in a manner that suits His Majesty]. The Most Beneficial (Allah)! Ask Him as He is The All-Knower of everything...”** [Al-Furqan: 9] His saying in Surah As-Sajda: **“Then He Istawa [rose over] the Throne [really in a manner that suits His Majesty]...”** [As-Sajda: 4] His saying in Surah Ta-Ha: **“The Most Merciful Istawa [rose over] the Throne [really in a manner that suits His Majesty].”** [Ta-Ha: 5] His saying, **“To Him ascent [all] the goodly words...”** [Fatir: 10] His saying, **“He arranges [every] affair from the heavens to the earth, then it [affair] will go up to Him...”** [As-Sajda: 5] His saying, **“Do you feel secure that He, Who is above the heaven [Allah], will not cause the earth to sink with you...”** [Al-Mulk: 16] Allah (SWT) informed about *Firaun* [Pharaoh] the cursed, that he said to *Haamaan*: **“And Firaun said: ‘O Haamaan! Build me a tower that I may arrive at the ways, the ways of the heavens, and I may look upon the God of Musa, but verily I think him to be a liar...’”** [Al-Ghafir: 36-37] He certainly said this because he heard Musa mentioning that his Lord is in the heavens. As you can see from his saying, **“...but verily I think him to be a liar...”** – meaning in reference to Musa’s saying: That there is a God in the heavens.

The scholars and the leaders of the Imams from the Predecessors – may Allah have mercy on them – did not differ that Allah (SWT) is upon His Throne and that His Throne is above His heavens. They affirm for Him that which He (SWT) affirmed, they believe in it, and they trust the Lord in His report.

They emit as Allah (SWT) emitted it regarding His Rising above the Throne, they go by its apparent [meaning] and they entrust its knowledge with Allah and they say, **“We believe in it; the whole of it [clear and the unclear Verses] are from our Lord.” And none receive admonition except men of understanding.** [Ala-Imran: 7] – just as Allah (SWT) informed about those who are firmly grounded in knowledge, indeed that they say this and He is pleased with them, and so He praised them for it.

Umm Salama in His saying (SWT), **“The Most Merciful Istawa [rose over] the Throne [really in a manner that suits His Majesty].”** [Ta-Ha: 5] said: *“The Rising [al-Istivaa] is something known, the ‘how’ of it is incomprehensible, affirmation of it is belief and the denial of it disbelief.”*

Ja’far bin Maymoon said: *“Maalik bin Anas was asked about His saying, ‘The Most Merciful Istawa [rose over] the Throne [really in a manner that suits His Majesty].’ [Ta-Ha: 5] ‘How does He rise?’ He said, ‘The Rising [al-Istivaa] is something known, the ‘how’ of it is incomprehensible,*

believing in it is an obligation, and asking about it is an innovation and I do not see you except as a deviant.” He ordered for him to be thrown out of his gathering.”

Ja’far bin Abdullah said: *“A man came to Malik bin Anas – meaning, asking him about His saying, **“The Most Merciful Istawa [rose over] the Throne [really in a manner that suits His Majesty].”** [Ta-Ha: 5] “How does He rise?” He said [the narrator] “I did not see him so upset from anything like how he became upset from his question. He started sweating and bowed his heads in silence. The people waited for the command in it, then Maalik gained his composure and said, “The ‘bow’ of it is incomprehensible. However, the Rising [al-Istiwaa] is something known, believing in it is an obligation, and asking about it is an innovation and I fear that you are an innovator.” – then he ordered for him to be thrown out from the circle.”*

Ja’far bin Abdullah said: *“A man came to Maalik bin Anas, so he said, “O Abu Abdullah! **“The Most Merciful Istawa [rose over] the Throne [really in a manner that suits His Majesty].”** [Ta-Ha: 5] “How does He rise?” He said [the narrator] “I did not see him so upset from anything like how he became upset from his question...” – then he mentioned [something] similar to it.*

Abu Ali al-Husayn bin al-Fadl al-Bajalee about the Rising, it was said to him: *“How is the rising above His Throne?”* So he said: *“I do not know the news of the unseen except to the extent which has been revealed for us, and certainly He has informed us – may His remembrance be exalted – that indeed He rose upon His Throne and He did not inform us how He rose.”*

Abdullah bin Mubaarak said: *“We know that our Lord is above the seven heavens, rose over the Throne, free from [being] in His creation, and do we not say as al-Jahmiyyah say, “Indeed He is here!” – while indicating towards the ground.*

Ibn Khuzaymah said: *“Whoever does not say that Allah (SWT) is upon His Throne and rose over His seven heavens, then he is a disbeliever in his Lord, his blood is violable. He is requested to repent, if he does not repent, then he is killed and he is thrown away upon some dunghills [trash yards] so that the Muslims are not harmed nor the covenant-holders by the bad stench of his corpse, and his wealth is booty, no one from the Muslims inherits from him, since the Muslim does not inherit the disbeliever as the Prophet (pbuh) said: “The Muslim does not inherit the disbeliever nor does the disbeliever inherit the Muslim.” – reported by Al-Bukhaari.”*

Our Imam Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Idrees ash-Shaafi’ee – may Allah be pleased with him – in his book, *“Al-Mabsoot”* justified as proof, in the case about emancipating a Muslim slave for an expiation and that emancipating the disbelieving slave is deemed incorrect as an expiation. This is due to the report of Mu’awiyah bin al-Hakam, he wanted to free his black slave girl as an expiation, so he asked the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) about her being freed. He (pbuh) tested her and said to her, *“Who am I?”* She gestured towards him and towards the heavens – by that she meaning, indeed you are the Messenger of Allah, the One Who is in the heavens. So he (pbuh) said: *“Free her, for indeed she is a believer.”*

So the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) judged her according to her Islam and her belief when she confirmed that her Lord is in the heavens, and she recognised her Lord with the attribute of highness and being above.

Ash-Shaafi’ee – may Allah be pleased with him – used this as a proof against those who differed regarding their saying, that it is permissible to release a disbelieving slave for expiation; with the

belief that Allah (SWT) is above His creation and above seven heavens upon His Throne. Likewise it is the belief of the Muslims – *Ahl as-Sunnah wa Al-Jamaa'h* – their predecessors and their successors. Since he – may Allah have mercy on him – does not related an authentic report and not believe in it.

Ash-Shaafi'ee – may Allah be pleased with him – said: *"If you see me say something differing to which is authenticated from the Prophet (pbuh) then know that I have lost my mind."*

Ash-Shaafi'ee – may Allah have mercy on him – narrated a report one day, so a questioner asked, *"O Abu Abdullah! Are you saying this as well?"* So he said, *"Do you see me in a synagogue or in a church! Do you see me upon the appearances of the disbelievers! Here you are seeing me in the mosques of the Muslims, upon the appearance of the Muslims, facing their Qiblah, and I narrated a report from the Prophet (pbuh) and then do not say as he says!"*

The difference between *Ahl as-Sunnah* and the people of innovations is that if they hear a report about the Attributes of the Lord, in reality they deny it totally and do not accept it or [...] in its apparent, they interpret it and give interpretations, and by this they intend to remove the report from its origin meaning or nullify [...] with their intellects and their opinions and they know in reality with certainty that indeed whatever the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, then it is as he (pbuh) said. Since he (pbuh) was the most knowledgeable about the Lord (SWT) and he did not say regarding Him except the truth and [via] revelation. Allah (SWT) said, **"No does he speak of [his own] desire. It is only an Inspiration that is inspired."** [An-Najm, 3-4]

Az-Zuhri – Imam of the Imams – may Allah be pleased with them – said as did many other scholars, *"Upon Allah is the Quran [revelation of it], and upon the Messenger is the proclamation and upon us is submission."*

Ja'd bin Dirham came to Wahb bin Munnabbih asking him about the Attributes of Allah (SWT), so he said to him, *"Woe to you O Ja'd! Diminish from this issue – I certainly think that you are from amongst the destroyed. O Ja'd! If Allah did not inform us in His book that He has a Hand, an Eye and a Face, then we would not say this, fear Allah!"* Ja'd did not remain [i.e. live long], he was certainly killed and crucified.

Khalid bin Abdullah al-Qisrey delivered a sermon on *Eid al-Adhaa* in Basra; he said in the end of his sermon, *"Proceed to your dwellings and sacrifice your animals! May Allah bless you in your sacrifices! I am offering my sacrifice today with Ja'a bin Dirham – indeed he says that Allah did not take Ibrahim as His khaleel, and that He did not speak to Musa! May He glorified and exalted far above what Ja'd is saying!"* Then he descended from the pulpit and slaughtered him with his own hand and then ordered him to be crucified.

⁷ Unreadable text from the manuscript

⁸ Unreadable text from the manuscript

The Descending and Coming of the Lord (SWT)

The People of Narrations affirm the Descending of the Lord every night to the lowest heaven without equalling it to the descending of the creation, without any likening to it and without [asking] any howness [about it]. Rather they affirm what the Prophet (pbuh) affirmed and they stop at where the Prophet (pbuh) stopped and they take the narrated authentic report with its mentioning of it upon its apparent meaning and they entrust the true nature of it to Allah (SWT).

Likewise they affirm what Allah – may His name be glorified – affirmed in His book regarding the mention of the Coming and the Arrival.

Which are mentioned in His saying, **“Do they then wait for anything other than that Allah should come to them in the shadows of the clouds and the angels?”** [Al-Baqarah, 210] And in His saying – may His name be glorified – **“And your Lord comes with the angels in rows.”** [Al-Fajr, 22]

I read the treatise of Shaykh Abu Bakr al-Ismaa’eelee to the people of *Jailaan* – Indeed Allah (SWT) descends to the lowest heavens, based upon the report which has been authenticated from the Messenger (pbuh). Allah (SWT) has said, **“Do they then wait for anything other than that Allah should come to them in the shadows of the clouds and the angels?”** [Al-Baqarah, 210] and He said, **“And your Lord comes with the angels in rows.”** [Al-Fajr, 22]

We believe in all of that which has been reported, without [asking any] howness about it. However if Allah (SWT) wanted to clarify for us the howness of it, He would have done so. So [because of this] we stop at what He has made obvious and we hold back from that which is obscure, as we have been certainly ordered to do this in His saying (SWT), **“It is He Who has sent down to you [Muhammad] the Book [this Quran]. In it are verses that are entirely clear, they are the foundations of the Book and others are not entirely clear. So as for those in whose hearts there is a deviation [from the truth] they follow that which is not entirely clear thereof, seeking Al-Fitnah and seeking for its hidden meanings, but no one knows its hidden meanings save Allah. And those who are grounded in knowledge say: ‘We believe in it; the whole of it [clear and unclear verses] are from our Lord.’ And none receive admonition except men of understanding.”** [Aali-Imraan, 7]

Ishaaq bin Ibraaheem al-Hanzaali said, *“The Amir Abdullah bin Taahir said to me, ‘O Abu Yaqoob! This hadith which you narrate from the Messenger of Allah (pbuh): ‘Our Lord descends every night to the lowest heaven.’ How does he descend? He said, ‘May Allah honour the Amir! It is not said ‘how is’ regarding the affair of the Lord. Indeed He descends without [the] how of it [i.e. do not ask how].’”*

Muhammad ibn Sallam said, *“I asked Abdullah bin al-Mubaarak about the descending [of Allah] in the night, in the middle of Shaa’baan. So Abdullah said: ‘O you poor person! The night of the middle [of Shaa’baan]! He descends every night!’”*

A man said, "O Abu Abdur-Rahmaan! How does he descend? Does that place not become vacant from Him?" So Abdullah said: "He descends how He wishes."

In another narration for this report Abdullah bin al-Mubaarak said to the man, "If a hadith comes to you from the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), submit to it."

Ahmad bin Sa'eed bin Ibraaheem bin Abdullah ar-Rebaatee said, "I attended a meeting with al-Amir Abdullah bin Taahir and Isbaaq bin Ibraaheem one day. Ibn Raahawaih attended [also]. He was asked about the hadith of the descending, "Is it authentic?" He said, "Yes." Some of the chiefs of Abdullah said, "O Abu Yaqoob! Do you believe that Allah (SWT) descends every night?" He said, "Yes." He said, "How does He descend?" So Isbaaq said to him, "Affirm [that Allah is] above [the heavens] before I describe for you the descending?" He said, "I have affirmed [that Allah is] above [the heavens]." Then Isbaaq said, "Allah (SWT) said, **"And your Lord comes with the angels in rows."** [Al-Fajr, 22] Then the Amir Abdullah said, "O Abu Yaqoob! This is regarding the Judgement Day." Isbaaq said, ""May Allah honour the Amir! The One Who will come on the Day of Judgement, than who is it that will stop Him from coming today!"

The reports regarding the Descend of the Lord every night to the lowest heavens are reports which are agreed upon in their authenticity. They are extracted from the two authentic books [al-Bukhaari and Muslim] from the chain of Malik ibn Anas, who narrated from Az-Zuhri, who narrated from al-Agar'e and Abu Salamah, who narrated from Abu Hurairah.

On the authority of Abu Hurairah – may Allah be pleased with him – "Indeed the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, "Our Lord descends – glorified and blessed be He – every night to the lowest heaven when the last third of the night remains. He says, "Who is there supplicating to me so I can answer his supplication? Who is there asking me so I can give him [what he wants]? Who is there seeking forgiveness from Me so I can forgive him?"⁹

All of them [the narrators] reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said, "Our Lord descends every night to the lowest heaven when the last third of the night remains. He says, "Who is there asking me so I can give him [what he wants]? "Who is there supplicating to me so I can answer his supplication? Who is there seeking forgiveness from Me so I can forgive him?"

Due to this, they use to prefer to pray during the last part of the night in its beginning. All of these paths of narrations have been recorded with its chains in my big book, known as *al-Intisaar*. This is the wording of Abu Salama and al-Agharr from Abu Hurairah.

In another narration, on the authority of Abu Hurairah from the Prophet (pbuh), "If half of the night or third of it passes, Allah descends to the lowest heaven and says, "Is there a requester so that he is given? Is there a supplicator so that his supplication is answered? Is there seeker of forgiveness so that he is forgiven?" Until the break of dawn."

In the narration of Sa'eed bin Marjaanah from Abu Hurairah; there is an addition towards the end of it and that is, "then He spreads out His Hands and says, "Who will lend to the One Who is neither indigent nor tyrant?"

⁹ The Author – may Allah have mercy on him – then mentioned fifteen different paths for the coming report, the paths has not been mentioned here in the translation to avoid prolongation [TN]

In the narration of Abu Haazim from Abu Hurairah from the Prophet (pbuh), *“Allah descends to the lowest heaven in the last third of the night and calls out, ‘Is there a requester so I can give to him? Is there seeker of forgiveness so I can forgive him? So nothing remains which has a soul but it is aware of it except the humans and the Jinns.’”* He said, *“That is the time when the roosters crows, the donkeys bray and the dogs bark.”*

In the narration of Musa bin ‘Uqbah on the authority of Ishaq bin Yhayaa on the authority of Ubaadah bin as-Saamit there are good additions; Ubaadah bin as-Saamit said, *“The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, ‘Allah descends – glorified and blessed be He – every night to the lowest heaven when the last third of the night remains. He says, ‘Is there not a slave from slaves supplicating Me so that I can answer his supplication? Is there not an oppressor who wronged his soul supplicating Me so I can forgive him? Is there not a person whose provision is constricted so he calls upon Me so that I can provide for him? Is there not an oppressed person who remembers Me so that I can help him? Is there not a prisoner supplicating Me so that I can liberate him?’” It [remains] like this until the daybreak and [then] He ascends upon His Footstool.”*

On the authority of Abu Zubair on the authority of Jaabir, *“Indeed the Prophet (pbuh) said, ‘Indeed in eve of Arafah’ Allah descends to the lowest heaven and He boasts about the inhabitants of the earth to the inhabitants of heaven, He says, ‘Look at my slaves dishevelled covered with dust emerging, they have come from all directions, they are hoping for My mercy whilst they have not seen My punishment. No day is seen where more slaves are freed from the Hellfire than on the Day of Arafah.’”*

On the authority of Rafah al-Jehaney, *“Indeed the Prophet (pbuh) said, ‘If the third of night it passes or half of the night or two thirds of it, Allah descends to the lowest heaven, He says, ‘I don’t ask about My slaves other than Myself. Who is seeking forgiveness from Me so I can forgive him? Who is supplicating Me, so can I respond to his supplication? Who is asking me so I can give to him?’” Until the break of dawn.”*

Abu Sa’eed and Abu Hurairah heard the Prophet (pbuh) saying, *“Indeed Allah delays until the first third of the night passes, [then] He descends to the lowest heaven, He says, ‘Is there a sinner? Is there a seeker of forgiveness? Is there a requester? Is there a supplicator?’” Until the sun rises.”*

Abu Sa’eed and Abu Hurairah said, *“The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, ‘Indeed Allah descends until there is third of the night [remaining], He descend to this heaven then He orders the gateways of the heaven, so they are opened. He says, ‘Is there a requester, so that I can give to him? Is there a supplicator, so that I can answer him? Is there a seeker of forgiveness, so that I can forgive him? Is there a destitute so that I can raise from him his needs? Is there someone seeking aid so that I can aid him?’” He continues [to do that] in that place until the emergence of fajr – every night from the lowest [heaven].”*

Abu Sa’eed and Abu Hurairah witnessed that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, *“If it [becomes] the [last] third of the night; He descends – glorified and blessed be He – to the lowest heaven, He says, ‘Is there a seeker of forgiveness, so that he is pardoned? Is there a requester, so that his request is fulfilled? Is there a repentant, so that he is forgiven?’”*

Abu Hurairah said, *“The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, ‘Allah – the Sublime – descends every night to the lowest heaven, He says, ‘I am the King, I am the King [thrice]. Who is asking Me, so that I can give to him? Who is supplicating Me, so that I can answer him? Who is seeking forgiveness from me, so that I can forgive him?’” He continues like this until the break of dawn.”*

I heard our teacher Abu Masoor, immediately after dictating this report to us said, *“Abu Hanifa was asked about it, he said, ‘He descends but we do not know ‘the how’.’”*

Some of them said: “He descends in a way which befits His Lordship but we do not know the how to it. His descending is not like the descending of the creation; vacating one place in order to occupy another, this is because He – may He be Exalted – is free from having His Attributes like the attributes of the creation just as His Essence is free from being like the essences of the creation. So His Coming, His Arrival, His Descend is upon the way it befits His Attributes, without anthropomorphization and without [asking] the how to it.”

The Imam Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Ishaq bin Khuzaymah in *“Kitaab at-Tawbeed”* which he authored, I heard from his grandson [one of its transmitters], Abu Taahir – may Allah have mercy on him – *Chapter: Mention of the reports with its firm chains, which was narrated by the scholars of the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq regarding the Descending of the Lord to the lowest heaven every night, without the [asking the] description of the howness of the Descend whilst affirming the Descend:*

“We view with full conviction, confessing with our tongues, believing with our hearts, we acknowledge with certainty what are in these reports about the mentioning of the Descend; without [asking] the description of the howness. This is because the Prophet (pbuh) did not describe for us the howness of the Descend of our Creator to the lowest heaven. He informed us that He Descends. Allah (SWT) commissioned His Prophet (pbuh) with explanation for what the Muslims are in need of from the matters of their religion. So we are believers in what are in these reports which mentions the Descending, not being commissioned for the description of the howness of the Descend, as the Prophet (pbuh) did not describe the howness of the Descend.”

Umm Salama, the wife of the Prophet (pbuh) said, *“What an excellent day! The day when Allah – the Sublime – descends to the lowest heaven.”* They said, *“What day is that?”* She said, *“The day of Arafat.”*

‘Aa’isha – may Allah be pleased with her – said on the authority of the Prophet (pbuh), *“Allah – the Sublime – descends in middle of Shaa’baan to the lowest heaven at night until the afternoon of the next day. He releases from the Fire a number that is equivalent to the hairs on the body of a goat [from the tribe] Bani Kalb, He writes [the one who will be a] pilgrim, He descends the provision of the year, He does not leave anyone except that they are forgiven – except the polytheist, the one that cuts off family ties, the binderer and the one who has enmity for someone.”*

Rafah bin ‘Uraabah al-Juhane said¹⁰ that the he (pbuh) said, *“If half of the night passes.”* Or said, *“Two thirds of it, Allah descends to the lowest heaven, He says, ‘No one asks more about My servants than Myself. Who is it that is asking me so I can give to him? Who is it that is supplicating Me, so can I respond to his supplication? Who is that is seeking forgiveness from Me so I can forgive him?’”* Until the daybreak.”” This is the wording of the report of al-Waleed.

¹⁰ The full report of Rafah has not been translated. Only the *“shaahid”* has been translated; the part of the report that has the evidence for this issue [TN]

Shaykh of Islam¹¹ said: I say: When the reports of the Descend were authenticated from the Prophet (pbuh) – *Ahl as-Sunnah* affirmed them and accepted the reports. They affirmed the Descend due to what the Prophet (pbuh) said, they did not believe it to resemble with the descend of His creation, they did not search for the howness of it, as there is no possible means for that.

They know, affirm and believe that the Attributes of Allah (SWT) does not resemble the attributes of the creation just as His Essence does not resemble the essences of the creation. High and far above is Allah about what *al-Mushabbihah* and *al-Mu'attilah* say – may He curse them severely!

Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ash-Shaybaanee said, “*Hamaad ibn Abu Haneefa said, ‘I said to some people, ‘Have you seen the saying of Allah (SWT), ‘And your Lord comes with the angels in rows.’ and His saying, ‘Do they then wait for anything other than that Allah should come to them in the shadows of the clouds and the angels?’ ‘So does our Lord come as He has said? And do the angles come in rows?’ They said, ‘As for the angels, they come in rows. As for the Lord – the Sublime – we certainly don’t know what is meant by that, nor do we know the howness of the Coming.’ So I said to them, ‘Indeed we do not commission you to know the howness of the Coming, but we commission you to believe in the Coming. What is your opinion about the one who denies that the angel will not comes in rows? How do you see [the case of this] person? They said, ‘A denying disbeliever.’ So I said, ‘So likewise, whoever denies that Allah (SWT) will not come, then indeed he is a denying disbeliever.’*”

Al-Fudayl bin ‘Iyaad said, “*If a Jahmi says to you, ‘Indeed we do not believe that the Lord descends from His place.’ Say [i.e. reply], ‘We believe the Lord does as He wants.’*”

¹¹ What is intended by “Shaykh of Islam” here is the author himself. This is from the transcript for clarification.

Adherence to the Sunnah and the leaving the Innovations

Yazeed bin Haaroon in his gathering narrated the report of Ismaa'eel bin Abu Khaalid on the authority of Qays bin Abu Haazim on the authority of Jareer bin Abdullah about the sighting, the saying of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh): *"Indeed you will see your Lord as you see the full moon."* A man said to him in the gathering, *"O Abu Khaalid! What is the meaning of this report?"* So he got angry and annoyed and then said, *"You are more like Sabeegh and you are more in need of what was done to him! Woe to you! Who possibly knows the howness to this! Is it possibly permissible for some to overstep this saying which came in the narration or to talk about it from one's own accord, [by that] he only makes a fool of himself and deems his religion to be light? If you hear a report from the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), adhere to it and do not introduce something new to it. If you adhere to it and do not sway in it, then you are safe and sound, but if you don't do that then you are destroyed."*

The story of Sabeegh which Yazeed bin Haaroon mentioned to the questioner: *"You are more like Sabeegh and you are in more need of what was done to him!"* It is which that has been narrated by Yahyaa bin S'aeed on the authority of S'aeed bin al-Musayyib that Sabeeg al-Tamimi came to the leader of the believers 'Umar bin Al-Khataab – may Allah be pleased with him – and said: *"O leader of the believers! Inform me about, **"By that scatters dust."** [Adb-Dhariyat: 1]?"* So he said, *"It is the wind, and if it wasn't for the fact that I heard the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) saying this, I would not have said this."* He said, *"Then tell me about, **"And that bear heavy weight of water."** [Adb-Dhariyat: 2]?"* So he said, *"It is the clouds, and if it wasn't for the fact that I heard the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) saying this, I would not have said this."* He said, *"Then tell me about, **"And those who distribute by command."** [Adb-Dhariyat: 4]?"* So he said, *"It is the angels, and if it wasn't for the fact that I heard the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) saying this, I would not have said this."* He said, *"Then tell me about, **"And that float with ease and gentleness."** [Adb-Dhariyat: 3]?"* So he said, *"It is the ships, and if it wasn't for the fact that I heard the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) saying this, I would not have said this."* He said: Then he ('Umar) ordered him to be beaten with one hundred lashes. Then he was confined to a house. Eventually when he recovered; he summoned him then beat him another one hundred lashes, then he loaded him on a small camel. He wrote to Abu Musa al-Ash'ari to prohibit him sitting in the company of people. He continued likewise, until he came to Abu Musa al-Ash'ari and he swore by heavy oaths that he does not find in himself what he used to find before. So he wrote to 'Umar informing him, *"I do not doubt except that he has spoken the truth, let him have his way with the company of people."*

Khaalid ibn Zur'ah narrated on the authority of his father, *"I saw Sabeegh ibn al-'Isl in Basrah, as if he was a mangy camel. He would attend circles, whenever he sat down with some people who did not know him, [then] they would receive a warning from another circle – [due] to the strict orders of the leader of the believers."*

Sulaymaan bin Yasaar narrated, *“A man from Bani Tamim who was known as Sabeegh, arrived at Madina and he had books with him. He began to ask about ambiguous [verses] of the Quran. This reached ‘Umar, so he sent for him and he prepared for him two canes made from a date palm. When he entered upon him and sat down, so he said to him, “Who are you?” He said, “I am Abdullah Sabeegh.” He replied, “I am Abdullah ‘Umar.” The he grabbed him and started beating him with the two canes, he did not stop beating him until he fractured his [head], and blood started pouring down his face. Then he said, “It is enough O Leader of the Believers! By Allah indeed that which was finding in my head has certainly has left.”*

Maalik bin Anas said, *“Be careful of the innovations!”* It was said, *“O Abu Abdullah! What are innovations?”* He said, *“The people of innovation are those who speak about the Names and the Attributes of Allah; [about] His Speech, His Knowledge and His Omnipotence. They do not remain silent about what the Companions and the Followers remained silent from.”*

Ash-Shaafi’ee – may Allah have mercy on him – said, *“A slave meeting Allah with all [sorts] of sins other than setting partners with Allah is more beloved to me than to meet Him with something from the innovations.”*

A man asked ‘Umar bin Abdul Aziz about something regarding innovations, so he said, *“Stick to the religion of the [thoughtless] child who is in the elementary stage and the Bedouin, and leave what is other than that.”*

Sufyaan bin al-‘Uyainah said, *“Everything that Allah described Himself with in His Book, then its explanation is its recitation, [we pass over it] in silence.”*

Al-Waleed bin Muslim said, *“I asked Al-Aw’zaaee, Sufyaan, Maalik bin Anas about narrations regarding the Attributes and the seeing of Allah in the Hereafter. They said, “Pass by them as they came without [asking the] howness of it.”*

Imam al-Zuhri – the Imam of the Imams in his era and the eminent of the scholars from the Imams in his time said, *“Upon Allah is the [revelation of the] Quran, upon the Messenger is the proclamation and upon us is submission.”*

On the authority of some of the predecessors, *“Islam is not reached except upon full submission.”*

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, *“Indeed this religion started as something strange, and it will return to be something strange as it started, so toobaa’ [glad tidings] for the strangers.”* It was said, *“O Messenger of Allah! Who are the strangers?”* He said, *“Those who revive my ways after me and teach it to slaves of Allah.”*

Abu ‘Ubaid al-Qaasim bin Sallaam said, *“The follower of the Sunnah is the like the holder of the hot coal, and in these days [in my view] he is more preferable to me than striking the sword in the path of Allah.”*

Abdullah bin Mas’ood said, *“O Mankind! Whoever has come to know of something then let him speak of it, and whoever does not know, let him say: “Allah knows best.” It is from knowledge that you say, “Allah knows best.” about what you do not know. Allah (SWT) said to His Prophet (pbuh), “Say [O Muhammad] “No wage do I ask of you for this [the Quran] nor am I one of the al-Mutakallifon [those who pretend and fabricate things which do not exist]”” [Sad, 86]*

Muhammad bin K'ab al-Quratey said, *"I entered upon 'Umar bin Abdul Aziz. I started really staring at him. He said, "You are certainly staring at me in way which you did not stare at me whilst I was in Medina!" I said: "From my amazement." He said, "So what has astonished you?" I said, "From the appearance of your paleness your skin, the loss of body weight, and the discard of your hair." He said, "How would it be if you saw me in my grave after three [days], and my two glances streaming upon my two cheeks [from severe crying] and my two nostrils steaming [from it] pus [going] into my mouth, then you would be in a severer denial for me."*

Abdullah bin Abbas – may Allah be pleased with them – narrated, attributing the report to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) that he said, *"For everything there is nobility, the noblest gathering is that which faces the Qiblah, do not pray behind the asleep nor the innovator, kill the snake and the scorpion even if you are in your prayers, do not cover the walls with throws"¹². Whoever looked into the personal [issues] of his brother without his permission then he certainly has looked into the Fire. Shall I not inform you of something [more] evil than that? They said, "Certainly! O Messenger of Allah!" He said, "The one who whips his slave and prohibits his support and decreases his right. Shall I not inform you of something [more] evil than that? The one who hates people and they hate him. Shall I not inform you of something [more] evil than that? The one who does not cancel false steps [in sales], nor except excuses, nor forgive mistakes. Shall I not inform you of something [more] evil than that? The one who is not silent about his good [actions] nor [is he] safe from [mentioning of] his evil [actions]. Whoever admires to be the strongest of people then let him put his reliance upon Allah. Whoever admires to be the richest of people, then let him be firmer [in confidence] with what is in the Hand of Allah than what is in the hand of others. Whoever admires to be the noblest of people then let him fear Allah. Certainly 'Eesaa – peace be upon him – stood amongst his people and said, "O Children of Israel! Do not speak with wisdom with the ignorant and thereby being unjust towards it and do not prevent it [the wisdom] from its people and thereby being unjust towards them. Do not oppress, do not reward the oppressor thereby nullifying your virtues with your Lord. The matters are three: the clear issues of His guidance so follow it, the clear issue of sin [and transgression] so avoid it, and the issues which you have differed in – so entrust [this] upon Allah (SWT)."*

¹² Meaning, do not cover the walls with throws because this practice used to resemble the arrogant and luxurious

Belief in The Last Day

The People of the Religion and *Sunnah* believe in the resurrection after death, on the Day of Judgement. Also in everything that Allah (SWT) has informed about; such as the terrors of that True Day, the different states of the slaves, and what the creation will see and encounter there in that dreadful day like receiving of the book [of records] in the right hand and the left, the answering of the questions – to all the earthquakes and the promised anxieties of that Great Day. [Also] the dreadful standing, the Path, the Scales, the spreading of the scrolls which includes [every] atom of good and evil, and other than these things.

The Intercession of the Prophet (pbuh)

The People of the Religion and *Sunnah* believe in the Intercession of the Messenger (pbuh), for the sinners of people of *al-Tawheed* and those who committed major sins, as it came authentically reported from the Messenger of Allah (pbuh).

On the authority of Thaabit from Anas, the Prophet (pbuh) said, *“My intercession is for the people that committed major sins from my nation.”*

On the authority of Abdullah bin ‘Umar, the Messenger of Allah said, *“I was given a choice between the intercession and entering a portion of my nation into Paradise, so I choose the intercession because it is more general and more adequate. Do you think that it is for the believers and the god-fearing? No, rather it is for the sinners, the stained and the wrong-doers.”*

Abu Hurairah said, *“O Messenger of Allah! Who will be the happiest of people with your intercession in the Day of Resurrection? He (pbuh) said, “I thought that no one will ask me about this report before you because of what I saw in your eagerness for learning hadith. Certainly the happiest of people with my intercession on the Day of Resurrection is the one who said, “There is no god worthy of worship except Allah.” sincerely out of his own accord.”*

Belief in the Pool, *al-Kawthar* and the People of Paradise and the People of the Fire

They believe in the Pool, *al-Kawthar* and in the entering of a group from the people of *at-Tawbeed* into Paradise without account. [They believe in] the accounting of a group of people from amongst them [who will have] a light reckoning, and in their entering into Paradise without any evil touching them or any punishment catching them. [They believe in] the entering of a group from their sinners into the Fire then in their emancipation [from the Fire] and then their entering into Paradise with their brothers who preceded them into Paradise. They do not abide in the Fire eternally. As for the disbelievers, they will abide in the Fire eternally and they will not come out from it ever. Allah will not leave anyone in the Fire amongst the sinners, from the People of Belief.

The Believers will see their Lord in the Hereafter

Ahl al-Sunnah testifies that the believers will see their Lord – blessed and glorified be He – on the Day of Judgement with their eyes.

They will look at Him, due to what has come in the authentic report from the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) in his saying, “*Certainly you will see your Lord as you see the full moon.*”

The comparison is between one manner of seeing with another manner of seeing, it is not [a comparison] between what is being seen and something else that is being seen¹³. The reports regarding the seeing of the Lord are reported in the book, *al-Intisaar*, with all its paths.

¹³ In other words, the ‘similarity’ mentioned in this report is between the seeing of Allah (SWT) and the full moon and not in the ‘similarity’ between Allah (SWT) and the full moon

The infinite duration of Paradise and Hell

Ahl al-Sunnah testifies that Paradise and Hell are two created things [presently]; they will remain and will never perish. The people of Paradise will never come out from it, and likewise the people of the Fire – who are its people and they have been created for it – will never leave from it.

They believe in ‘the death’ – it will be sacrificed upon a wall between Paradise and Hell, and the caller will call out on that day, “*O people of Paradise! Eternal life and no death! O people of the Fire! Eternal life and no death!*” – This is what has come authentically reported from the Messenger of Allah (pbuh).

The Reality of Faith [Speech and Action]

From the ways of People of Narrations is that faith [consists] of speech, action and belief; it increases with obedience and decrease with disobedience.

‘Umar bin Habeeb said, *“Faith increases and decreases.”* So it was said, *“What are its increase and what are its decrease?”* He said, *“If we remember Allah, praise Him and glorify Him – this is its increase. If we are heedless, neglectful or forgetful – then this is its decrease.”*

Yahyaa bin Sulaim said, *“I asked ten [people] from the jurists about faith so they said, “Speech and action.” I asked Hisbaam bin Hassaan so he said, “Speech and action.” I asked ibn Juraij so he said, “Speech and action.” I asked Sufyaan at-Thawri so he said, “Speech and action.” I asked al-Muthannab bin al-Sabbaah so he said, “Speech and action.” I asked Muhammad bin Abdullah bin ‘Amar bin ‘Uthmaan so he said, “Speech and action.” I asked Muhammad bin Muslim al-Taa’ifee so he said, “Speech and action.” I asked Fudayl bin ‘Iyaad so he said, “Speech and action.” I asked Naafi’ bin ‘Umar al-Jumaabee so he said, “Speech and action.” I asked Sufyaan bin ‘Uyainah so he said, “Speech and action.””*

Sufyaan bin ‘Uyainah said, *“Faith consists of speech and action, it increases and decreases.”* So his brother Ibraaheem bin ‘Uyainah said to him, *“O Abu Muhammad! You saying it decreases?”* So he said, *“Be quiet you child! Yes, it decreases until nothing remains from it.”*

Al-Waleed bin Muslim said, *“I heard al-Anza’ee, Maalik and S’aeed bin Abdul-Azeez rebuking those who said that, [faith is] belief [in the heart] without action and they say, “There is no faith except with action.”*

I say, so whoever’s obedience and good deeds is more numerous, then he is more complete in faith than the one who has little acts of obedience and has lot more of sins, heedlessness and neglect.

Ahmad bin S’aeed al-Rubaatee said, *“Abdullah bin Taahir said to me, “O Ahmad! Indeed you hate those people ignorantly, whereas I hate them out of knowledge. Firstly, their first issue is that they do not see [believe] in obedience to the ruler. Secondly, they certainly deem that faith has no levels. By Allah! I do not deem permissible for me to say, “My faith is like the faith of Yahyaa bin Yahyaa or like the faith of Ahmad bin Hanbal.” and they say, “Our faith is like the faith of Jibraa’eel and Meekaa’eel.””*

Ibn al-Mubaarak arrived at al-Rai and so a man went to him from one of the worshippers – it was thought that he was from the school of al-Khwaarij – so he said to him, *“O Abu Abdur-Rahmaan! What do you say about a person who fornicates, steals and drinks wine?”* He said, *“I do not take him out [from the circle] of faith.”* So he said, *“O Abu Abdur-Rahmaan! Upon old age you have become a Murji.”* He said, *“Al-Murjiyyah will not accept me. Al-Murjiyyah says, “Our good deeds are accepted and our bad deeds are forgiven.” If I knew that one good deed was accepted from me then I would have testified I am certainly in Paradise.”* Then he mentioned, *“Umar bin Al-Khattab said, “If the faith of Abu Bakr was weighed with the faith of the people of the Earth, he would certainly surpass.””*

Al-Husayn bin Harb – the brother of Ahmad bin Harb al-Zaahid – said, *“I testify that the religion of Ahmad bin Harb is which he professes with, that indeed faith [consists] of speech and action, and it increases and decreases.”*

The Believer is not Apostated with the Major sin

Ahl al-Sunnah believes that if the Muslim falls into many sins, whether they are minor or major – he is not apostated by it. If he left this world without repenting from them [as long as] he died upon *al-tawheed* and sincerity, his affair is with Allah (SWT); if He wants, He will pardon him and enter him into Paradise on the Day of Judgement safe and sound without being afflicted by neither the Fire or being punished for what he committed [or for] what accumulated from the misdeeds and the sins.

He will be escorted on the Day of Judgement with his sins and misdeeds. If He wants, He will hold him to account and punish him for a period with the punishment of the Fire. He will not be left in it eternally; rather He will release him and bring him out from it into the comfort of the abode of the Hereafter.

Our shaykh, Imam Abu Tayyib Sahl bin Muhammad – may Allah have mercy on him – used to say, *“The sinful Muslim, even if he is punished with the Fire – he will not be flung into it [the Fire] like the casting of the disbelievers. He will not remain in it [the Fire] like the remaining of the disbelievers nor will he be made miserable in it like the misery of the disbelievers.”*

The meaning of that is the disbeliever will be dragged upon his face to the Fire and will be cast in it inverted in iron chains and heavy shackles. The sinful Muslim, if he afflicted by the Fire, then he is entered into the Fire as a criminal enters prison in the world, on his feet – without being flung nor being inverted.

The meaning of his saying, *“he will not be flung into it [the Fire] like the casting of the disbelievers...”* – all of the disbeliever’s body is burnt, and every time his skin is roasted, it is replaced with another skin to taste the punishment [once again], as Allah explained it in His Book, in His saying,

“Surely! Those who disbelieved in Our Ayat. We shall burn them in the Fire as often as their skins are roasted through, We shall change them for other skins that they may taste the punishment.” [An-Nisaa: 56] As for the believers, their faces are not scorched by the Fire and the limbs of their prostration are not burnt, as Allah prohibited the Fire from burning the limbs of prostration.

The meaning of his saying, *“he will not remain in it [i.e. in the Fire] like the remaining of the disbelievers...”* – the disbeliever abides in Fire forever and does not come out from it ever. Allah will not leave anyone in the Fire forever from [amongst] the sinful Muslim.

The meaning of his saying, *“nor will he be made miserable in it like the misery of the disbelievers...”* – the disbelievers gives up all hopes in it from the Mercy of Allah nor does he have any hope of relief from the situation. As for the Muslims, their desire for the Mercy of Allah will never be cut off in any situation. The final outcome for all the Muslims is Paradise, because they were created for it and it was created for them, a grace and favour from Allah.

The Ruling of leaving the Prayer Intentionally

The people of narrations differed in [regarding] the Muslim leaving the obligatory prayer intentionally. Ahmad bin Hanbal and a group from the scholars of the predecessor – may Allah have mercy on them – regarded him to have left Islam. They brought him out from the fold of Islam due the authentic report reported from the Prophet (pbuh), who said, *“Between the slave and polytheism is leaving of the prayer, whoever leaves the prayer then he has certainly disbelieved.”*

Al-Shaafi’ee, his companions and a group from the scholars of the predecessors – may Allah have mercy on all of them – held the view that he is not apostated – as long as he intentionally did not deny the obligation of the prayer, but the killing becomes obligatory just as it is obligatory for the apostate of Islam.

They interpreted the report: Whoever leaves the prayer denying it [its obligation].” – just as Allah (SWT) informed, relating upon Yusuf – peace be upon him – he said, **“Verily, I have abandoned the religion of a people that believe not in Allah are disbelievers in the Hereafter.”** [Yusuf: 37] – He was not involved with disbelief of the people, so he separated from them by denying them.

The Deeds of the Slaves are Created

From the sayings of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaa'* regarding the deeds of the slaves is that they are certainly created by Allah (SWT). They do not dispute regarding it. They do not regard anyone who denies and negates this saying from people of guidance and the religion of truth.

The Guidance and The Straying is with the Will of Allah

They testify that Allah (SWT) guides whom He wills to His religion and misguides whom He wills away from it. There is no argument for the one who Allah has misguided, nor is there any excuse for him. Allah (SWT) said, **“Say: “With Allah is the perfect proof and argument, had He so willed, He would have guided you all.””** [Al-An’aam: 149] He said, **“And if We had will, surely! We would have given every person his guidance, but the Word from Me too affect...”** [As-Sajda: 13] He said, **“And surely, We have created many of the jinns and mankind for Hell.”** [Al-A’raf: 179]

Glorified be He, He created the creation without any need of them. He made them into two parties; a party for Paradise, as a favour and a party for the Fire, out of His Justice. He created some from amongst them misguided [and others] guided, [some] miserable [and others] happy, and [some] close to His mercy and [others] far from it: **“He cannot be questioned as to what He does, while they will be questioned.”** [Al-Ambiya: 23] **“Surely, His is the Creation and Commandment. Blessed by Allah, the Lord of the Alameen.”** [Al-A’raf: 54]

He (SWT) said, **“As He brought you [into being] in the beginning, so shall you be brought into being [in the Day of Resurrection]. A group He has guided, and a group deserved to be in error; [because] they surely too the devils as protectors and helpers instead of Allah, and consider that they are guided.”** [Al-A’raf: 29-30] He said, **“For such their appointed portion will reach them from the Book...”** [Al-A’raf: 37] Ibn ‘Abbaas said, *“It is what preceded them of happiness and misery.”*

Abdullah bin Mas’ood said, *“The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and his family – and he is the most truthful and his being truthful [is a fact] said, “Indeed the [constituents of] creation of one of you is gathered in the womb of his mother for forty days, after which it becomes a clot of blood in another period [of forty days], then it becomes a lump of flesh in another period [of forty days] then Allah sends the angel to it with instructions concerning four things; its provision, its action, its appointed time [of its death] and [whether] it will be miserable or happy. By Him! The One Who has my soul in His Hand! Verily one of you carries out the actions of the people of Paradise until there remain between him and Paradise the distance of a cubit, then the writing of the destiny overtakes him and so therefore he carries out the actions of the people of the Fire and thus enters it. Verily one of you carries out the actions of the people of Fire until there remain between him and the Fire the distance of a cubit, then the writing of the destiny overtakes him and so therefore he carries out the actions of the people of the Paradise and thus enters it.”*

On the authority of ‘Aisha, *“The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, “Verily a man carries out the actions of the people of Paradise whilst it is certainly written in the Book that he is from the people of Fire. So if he changes during [the time of] his death and carries out the actions of the people of Fire, he dies and thus enters the Fire. Verily a man carries out the actions of the people of the Fire whilst it is certainly written in the Book that he is from the people of Paradise. So if he carries out the action of the people of Paradise before his death, he dies and thus enters Paradise.””*

The Decree and The Predestination

Ahl al-Sunnah testifies and believes that indeed the good, the evil, the benefit and the harm is by the decree and predestination of Allah. One cannot resist it nor can one escape it, and nor can one can desist from them both. Nothing befalls a man except what his Lord has written for him; even if the creation strove to benefit a man by what Allah has not written for him – they will not be able to do so. If they strove to harm him by what Allah did not decree for him – they will not be able to do so. This is what came in report of ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbaas from the Prophet – peace and blessings be upon him and his family.

Allah (SWT) said, **“And if Allah touches you with hurt, there is none who can remove it but He; and if he intends any good for you, there is none who can repel His favour which He causes it to reach whomsoever of His slaves He will.”** [Yunus: 107]

The Evil is not attributed to Allah

From the school and the way of *Ahl al-sunnah* is their saying that the good and the evil are from Allah and by His decree. It is certainly not ascribed to Allah what is presumed as a deficiency or a defect in itself; so it is not said, “O the creator of the monkeys, the pigs, the scarab and the dung beetle!” – even though nothing created exists except [that] the Lord is its creator.

Regarding that came the saying of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) in the opening supplication [to the prayer], *“Blessed and exalted be You! All the good is from You and evil does not belong to You.”* Its meaning – and Allah knows best – is, that the evil is not attributed to You in itself and intentionally, even if it said to You: “O the Creator of evil!” or “O the decrier of evil!” – even though He is the Creator and the Decrier of them two [evil and good] as a whole.

Likewise Al-Khidr – peace be upon him – attributed the decree of the defective damage to himself, as Allah informs us in his saying, **“As for the ship, it belonged to poor people working in the sea. So I wished to make a defective damage in it...”** [Al-Kahf: 79] When he mentioned good, kindness and mercy, he attributed the decree of them to Allah (SWT), so he said, **“...you Lord intended that they should attain their age of full strength and take out their treasure as a mercy from your Lord...”** [Al-Kahf: 82]

Likewise He informed us about Ibrahim’s saying – peace be upon him, **“And when I am ill, it is He Who cures me.”** [Ash-Shuara: 80] So, he [Ibrahim] attributed the illness to himself and the cure to his Lord – even though it was as a whole from Him.

Affirmation of The Will of Allah

From the school of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaa'* is that certainly Allah (SWT) is the [One Who] wills all the actions of the slaves, the good of it and the evil of it. No one believes except by His Will, if He wanted He would certainly made mankind into one nation. If He wanted that no one should be disobedient to Him, then He would not have created Iblees. The disbelief of the disbelievers and the faith of the believers are by His Decree and Power and by His Will and Intention (SWT). He wanted all off this; He willed it and decreed it.

Allah (SWT) is Pleased with Faith and Hates Disbelief and Sin

Allah is pleased with faith and obedience and hates disbelief and sins.

Allah (SWT) said, **“If you disbelieve, then verily, Allah is not in need of you, He like not disbelief for His slaves. And if you are grateful [by being believers], He is pleased with you.”** [Az-Zumar: 7]

Avoiding the Judgement of a certain person entering Paradise and the Fire

The People of Narration believe and testify that the final endings of the slaves are unknown. No one knows as to how his fate will be sealed, they do not make a judgement for a specific person that he is from amongst the people of Paradise nor do they make a judgement upon a specific person that he is from amongst the people of the Fire because this is concealed from them. They do not know in which state a human will die upon, and [due to this fact they] therefore say, “Indeed we are believers if Allah wills.” – meaning, [We are] from those believers whose fates will be sealed with a good ending, if Allah wills.

**Whoever dies upon Islam his Final Outcome is Paradise and whoever dies
upon Disbelief his Final Outcome is the Fire**

They testify for the one who dies upon Islam that his final outcome is certainly Paradise, even though their destiny was written by Allah that they will be punished with the Fire for a period because of their sins which they accumulated and did not repent from. Then they will be entered finally into Paradise. No one will remain in the Fire from amongst the Muslims, as a favour and a grace from Allah.

Whoever dies upon disbelief – and may Allah protect us from that, then he will be flung into the Fire. He will not be rescued from it and he will remain there forever.

The Ones that were given the glad tidings of Paradise

As for those who the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) testified [Paradise] for from amongst his Companions in person, then [in that case] the People of Narrations testified for them that, believing in the Messenger (pbuh) in what he mentioned and promised for them. He (pbuh) did not testify Paradise for them except after knowing that for certain. Allah (SWT) informed His messenger (pbuh) as much as He wished about what He wanted to regarding the matters of His divine secret. This is clear in His (SWT) saying, **“[He alone] the All-Knower of the unseen, and He reveals to none His unseen. Except to a messenger [from mankind] whom He has chosen...”** [Al-Jinn: 26-27]

He (pbuh) gave glad tidings of Paradise to ten of his Companions and they are; Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmaan, ‘Ali, Talha, Al-Zubair, Abd al-Rahmaan bin ‘Auf, S’ad, Sa’eed, Abu ‘Ubaidah and bin Al-Jar’raah.

Likewise he (pbuh) said to Thaabit bin Qays bin Shimaas, *“You are from amongst the people of Paradise.”* Anas bin Maalik said, *“He used to certainly walk amongst us and we use to say, “Indeed he is from amongst the people of Jannah.”*

The Best of the Companions and their Caliphate

They testify and believe that the best of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah – peace and blessings be upon him and his family – are Abu Bakr, then ‘Umar, then ‘Uthmaan and then ‘Ali. They are certainly the four rightly guided caliphs whom the Messenger of Allah – peace and blessings be upon him and his family – had mentioned about their caliphate in his saying, that which Sa’eed bin Jamhaan narrated from Safeenah, *“The caliphate after me is [for] thirty years.”*

After the passing of their days the matter will return to Kingship rule containing tribulations, due to what had been reported from the Messenger – peace and blessings be upon him and his family.

The People of Narrations affirm the caliphate of Abu Bakr – may Allah be pleased with him – after the death of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) due to the choice and the agreement of the Companions, and due to their saying which leaves no exceptions:

“The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was pleased with him for our religion, so we are pleased with him for our world.” Meaning, [certainly he (pbuh) appointed him to lead the obligatory prayers during the days of his illness – and that [i.e. the prayers] is the religion – so [therefore] we were pleased with him [as a] successor to the Messenger (pbuh) for us in the matters of the world.

Also their saying, *“The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) put you forward so who will obstruct you.”* They meant by this [statement], certainly he (pbuh) put you forward to lead the prayer over us during the days of his sickness, and so we prayed behind you due to his (pbuh) command, so who will obstruct you after he sent you forward?

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) used to speak about the qualities of Abu Bakr during his lifetime, by which he clarified for the Companions that he certainly is the most deserved for the caliphate after him. Due to this they agreed upon and united and thus they benefitted by his position [as the caliph]. By Allah! They were elevated by him and attained glory, [so much so that] Abu Hurairah – may Allah be pleased with him – said, *“By Allah! Whom there is no god worthy of worship except Him! If Abu Bakr was not appointed as the caliph, Allah would not be worshipped.”* When it was said to him, *“Be quiet O’ Abu Hurairah! What are you saying?”* He supported the correctness of his saying with proofs and so they believed him and agreed with him regarding it.

Then the caliphate of ‘Umar bin Al-Khattaab – may Allah be pleased with him and gratify him – by the appointment of Abu Bakr – may Allah be pleased with them – and with the agreement of the Companions. With the execution of Allah (SWT) – by his position [as the caliph] – [occurred] the advancement and magnification of Islam – as He had promised.

Then the caliphate of ‘Uthmaan – may Allah be pleased with him – with the consensus of the members of the governing council, the consensus of all the Companions and their approval of him until the matter was appointed to him.

Then caliphate of ‘Ali – may Allah be pleased with him – through the pledge of the Companions to him. All of them knew and saw – may Allah be pleased with them – that he was the most deserved creation and was the most superior of them in that time for the caliphate. They did not deem it permissible to disobey him or to oppose him.

These were the four rightly guided caliphates, by whom Allah helped the religion, by their position [as the caliphates] He defeated and subdued the apostates, by their position He strengthened Islam, He raised the banners of truth during their days. He illuminated the darkness by their brilliance, by their light and by their splendour. He fulfilled His prior promise with their caliphate in His saying (SWT), **“Allah has promised those among you who believe and do righteous deeds, that He will certainly grant them succession [to the present rulers] in the earth, as He granted to those before them, and that He will grant them the authority to practice their religion, that He has chosen for them [i.e. Islam] and he will certainly give them in exchange a safe security after their fear...”** [An-Noor: 55] And His saying, **“...are severe against the disbelievers...”** [Al-Fath: 29]

So whoever loved them, showed allegiance to them, prayed for them, guarded their rights, and acknowledged their virtues, then he has triumphed with the triumphant. Whoever detested them, cursed them and ascribed to them what *al-Rawaafid* and *al-Khawaarij* had ascribed to them – may Allah curse them! – then, he is destroyed with those who are destroyed.

The Messenger of Allah – peace and blessings be upon him and his family – said, *“Do not curse my Companions, whoever cursed them then the curse of Allah is upon him.”*

The Prayer behind the Righteous and the Evil Imam and *al-Jihaad* alongside with them

The people of narrations hold that the Friday prayer, the 'Eid prayers and prayers other than these two prayers are permissible behind every Muslim Imam whether he is righteous or evil.

They hold that *Jihaad* against the disbelievers [is correct] alongside with them [i.e. Imams], whether if they are tyrannical oppressors. They believe in making supplication for them, for their betterment, their success and their righteousness.

They do not believe in revolting against the leaders with weapons, even if they see them refraining from justice [and turning to] to oppression and injustice.

They believe in fighting against the rebels until they turn back to the obedience of the just Imam.

The Stance of *Ahl al-Sunnah* regarding what broke out between the Companions

They believe in abstention from [speaking] about what broke out between the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). They keep their tongues clean from mentioning things about them, which consist of faults and shortcomings. They hold in asking for Allah's mercy upon all of them and they show allegiance to all of them.

Likewise, they believe in venerating his wives – may Allah be pleased with them – supplicating for them, acknowledging their virtues, and they acknowledge that they are the Mother of the Believers.

Entry into Paradise by Allah's Virtue and His Mercy

They believe and testify that Paradise is not entitled upon anyone, even if his deeds were the best and his path was approved – unless Allah favours him. So it is granted to him by His grace and favour; since the good deeds he did was not made easy for him except by the facilitation of Allah – may His Name be exalted! If He did not guide him, then he would not have been guided to the right way ever.

Allah (SWT) said, **“And had it not been by for the Grace of Allah and His Mercy on you, none of you would ever have been pure from sins. But Allah purifies [guides to Islam] whom He wills...”** [An-Noor: 21] And in [other] verses similar to it.

Every created thing has an Appointed Term

They believe and testify that Allah has appointed for every creation an appointed term. The soul will not die except by His permission – at an appointed term. If the appointed term for a man comes to an end, then there is nothing but death awaiting him – and there is no escape from it.

Allah (SWT) said, **“And every nation has its appointed term; when their term is reached, neither can they delay nor can they advance it an hour [or a moment].”** [Al-A’raf: 34]

And He said, **“And no person can ever die except by Allah’s Leave and at an appointed term.”** [Aal ‘Imraan: 145]

They believe that indeed the one that died or the one that got killed, certainly that his appointed term had ended.

Allah (SWT) said, **“...even if you had remained in your homes, those for whom death was decreed would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death...”** [Aal ‘Imraan: 154]

And He said, **“Wheresoever you may be, death will overtake you even if you are in fortresses built up strong and high.”** [An-Nisaa: 78]

Whispering of the Devils

They believe that Allah (SWT) created the devils instilling evil to the mankind, intending their slippage [into sins] and they lie in wait for them.

Allah (SWT) said, **“And certainly, the devils do inspire their friends [from mankind] to dispute with you, and if you obey them, then you would indeed be polytheist...”** [Al-An’aam: 121]

Allah (SWT) gives them mastery over whom He wants and protects whom He wants from their plots and their deceptions.

Allah (SWT) said, **“And *istafziz* [literally means: befool them gradually] those whom you can among them with your voice, make assaults on them with your cavalry and your infantry, mutually share with them wealth and children and make promises to them.” But Satan promises them nothing but deceit. Verily! My slaves, you have no authority over them. And All-Sufficient is your Lord as a Guardian.”** [Al-Israa: 64-65]

And He said, **“Verily, he has no power over those who believe and put their trust only in their Lord; his power is only over those who obey and follow him [Satan]...”** [An-Nahl: 99-100]

Magic and Magicians

They testify that in this world magic and magicians exists, but they do not harm anyone except by the permission of Allah (SWT).

Allah (SWT) said, **“...but they could not thus harm anyone except by Allah’s Leave...”** [Al-Baqarah: 102]

So whoever amongst them bewitches, uses magic, and believes that it certainly harms or benefits without Allah’s Leave, then has certainly disbelieved.

If he is characterised by which reneges¹⁴ one’s faith, then [in that case] he is asked to repent. If he does not repent, then [in that case] he is killed. If he is not characterised by [acts of] disbelief or if he spoke by [speech] which is not understood, then [in that case] he is prohibited from it, and if he returns to it then is chastised.

If he [the magician] says, “Magic is not prohibited and I believe in its permissibility.” – then, [in that case] his killing becomes obligatory because he has made permissible what the Muslims have agreed upon in its prohibition.

¹⁴ Meaning, by that which will make him fall into disbelief [TN]

Prohibition of Alcoholic Beverages and Safeguarding the Prayers

The People of Narrations prohibits the intoxicating liquor from beverages [that is] extracted from grapes, raisins, dates, honey, barley or from anything other than these which intoxicates. They prohibit the small amount of it and the large amount of it. They deem it impure, they keep away from it and they obligate the legal punishment for it.

They believe in hastening to perform the prayer and [they believe that] establishing it in its earlier times is better than delaying it until its later time.

They deem it obligatory to read the opening chapter of the Book behind the Imam.

They command in the perfecting of the bowing and the prostrating; necessary and obligatory. They consider the accomplishment of the bowing and the prostration whilst [attaining] tranquillity [and calmness] in them, and [likewise] tranquillity in straightening up from the bowing position and being upright from it. Likewise, straightening up from the prostration and the sitting between the two prostrations whilst being tranquil in it are from the pillars of the prayer; which is not valid except by completing them [i.e. the pillars].

The Enjoinment of one another to Good Deeds

They enjoin one another to do the vigil night prayer after the sleep, keeping ties with kinship, spreading the *salaam*, the giving of food, and showing mercy to the poor, the needy and the orphans. [They enjoin one another to take] concern with the matters of the Muslims. They are modest in food, drink, clothing, and marriage. They take steps in the matters of goodness, commanding good and forbid evil, and hastening in doing righteous deeds together. They are wary of an evil ending [due] to lust and desire. They enjoin one another to truth and patience.

They love one another for [the sake of the] religion and hate each other for [the sake of the] religion. They avoid quarrel and agreements regarding Allah. They keep away from the people of innovations and heresies, and they show enmity to the people of desires and the people of ignorance.

They follow the Prophet (pbuh) and his Companions – who are like the stars; whoever is followed [from amongst] them, then they are guided, just as the Prophet (pbuh) said regarding them.

They follow the righteous predecessors from the Imams of the Religion and the scholars of the Muslims. They hold firm on to what they were adhering to from the clear firm religion of truth.

Hatred of the People of Innovation

The hate the people of innovation who invented new things in the religion, which was not from it. They do not love them, or associate with them, or listen to their speech, or company them, or argue with them regarding the Religion or debate with them. They believe in guarding their ears from listening to their falsehood; which if it passed by the ears and settles in the hearts it causes harm and brings on devilish insinuations of immoral notions – because of what [the falsehood] entailed.

Regarding it Allah (SWT) revealed His saying, **“And when you [O Muhammad] see those who engage in a false conversation about Our verses by mocking them, stay away from them till they return to another topic.”** [Al-An’aam: 68]

The Characteristics of the People of Innovation

The characteristic of the People of Innovation are very apparent. The most apparent of their signs and their characteristics is their severe enmity towards the carriers of the reports of the Prophet (pbuh). They despise them, and they name them as *Hasawiyyah*, *Jahalah*, *Dhaabiriyah*, and *Mushabbihah* – due to their beliefs regarding the reports of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh); that they are separated from knowledge¹⁵ and certainly the knowledge is that which the Satan casts into them as a result of their corrupt minds, the devilish insinuations in their dark chests, notions of their empty inactive hearts which are devoid from any goodness, and the pretexts [of their minds].

Rather the fact is, they are nothing but false and invalid obscurities; **“Such are they whom Allah has cursed, so that He has made them deaf and blinded their sight.”** [Muhammad: 23] **“And whomsoever Allah disgraces, none can honour him. Verily! Allah does what He wills.”** [Al-Hajj: 18]

Ahmad bin Sinaan al-Qataan said, *“There is no innovator in this world except that he hates the People of Narrations. If a man invents [in the religion] then the sweetness of narrations is taken out from his heart.”*

Ahmad bin al-Hasan al-Trimidhi said to [Ahmad bin Hanbal], *“O Abu Abdullah! They mentioned [about] the People of Narrations to Ibn Abu Qutaylah in Makkah so he said, ‘The People of Narrations are people of evil.’ Ahmad bin Hanbal while shaking off his garment said, ‘Heretic! Heretic! Heretic!’ – until he entered the house.”*

Abu Nasr bin Salaam al-Faqhee said, *“There is nothing more heavier upon the people of deviation nor something more hateful to them than the hearing of reports and its narrations with their chains.”*

I heard al-Haakim saying: *“I heard Shaykh Abu Baker Ahmad bin Ishaaq bin Ayyub al-Faqhee whilst he was debating a man: ‘So and so narrated to us.’ So the man said to him, ‘O come on! Leave us from the ‘he narrated to us business! Up to where will you narrate to us from?’ So the Shaykh said to him, ‘Get up you disbeliever! It is not permissible for you to enter my house ever after this!’ Then he turned around towards us and said, ‘I did not tell anyone ever to not enter my house except this [man].’”*

Abu Haatim Muhammad bin Idrees al-Handhaalee al-Raazee said, *“The sign of the People of Innovations is the slandering of the People of Narrations [Ahl al-Atar]. The sign of the heretics [al-Zanaadiqa] is their naming of the People of Narration with [the name] ‘Hasawiyyah’ – by that they want destruction of narrations. The sign of al-Qadariyyah is their naming of Ahl al-Sunnah with [the name] ‘Mujbira’. The sign of al-Jahmiyyah is their naming of Ahl al-Sunnah with [the name] ‘Mushabbihah’. The sign of the al-Raafida is their naming of the people of narrations with [the names] ‘Naabita’ and ‘Naasiba’”*

I say: All of that is fanaticism. *Ahl al-Sunnah* does not unite except with one name and that is, *“The People of Narrations.”*

¹⁵Meaning, the reports of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) does not contain knowledge

I say: I saw the People of Innovations with these names by which they titled *Ahl al-Sunnah*. They acted with them [like] the way of polytheists did with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). They wanted to upset him by calling him such names. So, some of them named him, “a magician”. Some of them named him, “a poet”. Some of them named him as, “an insane”. Some of them named him, “a madman” and some of them named him as, “a fabricator, an inventor, and a liar”. The Prophet (pbuh) – peace and mercy be upon him and his family – was free and far from these flaws. He was not but a chosen messenger and a prophet.

Allah (SWT) said, **“See how they coin similitudes for you, so they have gone astray and they cannot find a [right] path.”** [Al-Furqan: 9]

Likewise the innovators – may Allah forsake them – they seek to assault and try to cause controversy over the carries of his reports (pbuh), the transmitters of his narrations, the narrators of his reports and the followers of his way. So some of them have named them as, “*Hasawiyyah*”, some as, “*Mushabbiba*”, some as, “*Naabita*”, some as, “*Naasiba*” and others of them named them as “*Jabariyyah*”.

The People of Narrations are protected, innocent, pure, clean and shielded from all these flaws. They are not except the people of the illuminating *Sunnah*; the pleasing way of life, the right path, and the people of the profound and solid proofs. Allah (SWT) favoured them with the adherence to His Book, His revelation, His address and in the following of His messenger (pbuh) regarding his reports; in which he (pbuh) ordered with good for his nation, by way of speech and actions and he prevented them from that which is detestable, by way of [his sayings and actions].

Allah helped them with the adherence to the way of his life (pbuh), with the guidance of clinging on to his path, and in the opening of their hearts for the love of him, and the love for the Imams of his law and the scholars of his nation.

Whoever loves a people then he will be with them on the Day of Judgement due to the saying of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), “*A man is with the one whom he loves.*”

The Characteristics of *Ahl al-Sunnah*

One of the characteristics of *Ahl al-Sunnah* is their love for the Imams of the *Sunnah*, its scholars, its helpers and its supporters, and their hatred for the Imams of the Innovations; those who call to Fire and direct their companions to the abode of ruin [Hell]. Allah (SWT) has certainly adorned the hearts of *Ahl al-Sunnah* and illuminated them with love for the scholars of the *Sunnah*, as a favour and a grace from Him (SWT).

Abu Rajaa' Qutaybah bin Sa'eed read to us his book *"Kitaab al-Eemaan"* – towards the end of it: *"So if you see a man [who] loves Sufyaan al-Thawree, Maalik bin Anas, al-Awzaa'ee, Suh'bah, ibn al-Mubaarak, Abu Ahwas, Shareek, Wakee', Yahyaa bin Sa'eed, and Abd al-Rahmaan bin Mahdi then know that he is certainly a companion of the Sunnah."*

Ahmad bin Salma' said, *"I annexed my handwriting under it¹⁶ and [added] Yahyaa bin Yahyaa, Ahmad bin Hanbal, Ishaq bin Ibraaheem bin Raahawayh'. When he arrived at this passage, the people of Naysaaboor looked at us and he said, "These people hate Yahyaa bin Yahyaa." So we said to him, "O Abu Rajaa'! What Yahyaa bin Yahyaa?" He said, "A righteous man, an imam of the Muslims and [likewise] Ishaq bin Ibraaheem is an imam and Ahmad bin Hanbal – [who] is the most senior ranking one from whom I have named from amongst them."*

I also annexed to those [names] which Qutaybah has mentioned – may Allah have mercy on him. Certainly whoever loves them then he is a follower of the *Sunnah*. [Whoever loves them] from the imams of the people of narrations. By whom they imitate, by their course they are rightly guided, by their bearings and by their adherents they arrange themselves, and in their following they revive their remnants. Another group, from amongst them:

Muhammad bin Idrees al-Shaafi'ee, Se'eed bin Jubayr, al-Zuhree, al-Sha'bee, al-Taymee.

Those after them like: Layth bin S'ad al-Misree, al-Awzaa'ee, al-Thawree, Sufyaan bin 'Uyaynah al-Hilaali, Hamaad bin Salamah, Hamaad bin Zayd, Yoonus bin 'Ubayd, Ayoob, ibn 'Aun and the likes of them.

Those after them like Yazeed bin Haaron, 'Abd al-Razzaaq and Jareer bin Abd al-Hameed.

Those after them such as Muhammad bin Yahyaa al-Dhulee, Muhammad bin Ismaa'eel al-Bukhaaree, Muslim bin al-Hajjaaj al-Qushayree, Abu Daawood al-Sajjistaanee, Abu Zur'ah al-Raazee, Abu Haatim and his son, Muhammad bin Muslim bin Warah al-Raazee, Muhammad bin Aslam al-Toosee, 'Uthmaan bin Sa'eed al-Daarimee, Muhammad bin Ishaq bin Khuzaymah – who was called "Imam of the Imams" – upon mu life! – he was Imam of the Imams during his time and era. Abu Yaqoob Ishaq bin Ismaa'eel al-Bustee.

¹⁶ Meaning, Ahmad bin Salam added some names of the people of *al-Sunnah* to the book: *Kitaab al-Eemaan*

My two grandfathers from my two parents – Abu Sa’eed Yahyaa bin Mansoor al-Zaahid al-Harwee, ‘Adi bin Hamdawayh al-Saabooncey and his two sons – the two swords of the *Sunnah* – Abu Abdullah al-Saabooncey and Abu Abd al-Rahmaan al-Saabooncey and other besides them from amongst the Imams of the *Sunnah* – who were holding fast on to it, helpers towards it, callers towards it, and guiders towards it.

These sentences which I put down in writing in this section were believed by all of them. They did not differ in it rather they all agreed upon all of it.

They agreed upon with the subdual of the people of innovations, upon their degradation, upon their humiliation, upon their isolation, upon their distancing, and parting company from them for their company and their association – seeking closeness to Allah (SWT), by their avoidance and their abandonment [of them].

The teacher, the Imam – may Allah have mercy on him – said:¹⁷ With the favour of Allah (SWT) I am an adherer of their tracks, a guider by their light, and an advisor to by brothers and companions [that they] do not turn away from their path, or follow the sayings of others, or keep themselves busy with these new things from innovations, which have become well known amongst the Muslims, which have appeared and spread.

If [just] one of these innovations came upon the tongue of [just] one person during the era of those Imams, they would have certainly abandoned him, accused him of heresy, accused him of lying, and developed hatred for him.

And do not be deceived my brothers – may Allah preserve you – by the multitude of the people of innovation or by their abundant numbers. Indeed the abundant numbers of the people of falsehood and the fewness of the numbers of the people of truth are from the signs of the approaching of the True Day. That is certainly from the indications of the approaching of the Hour, since the Messenger – the Chosen – peace and mercy be upon him – said, “*Certainly! From the signs of the Hour and its approaching are diminishing of knowledge and increasing of ignorance.*” The knowledge is the *Sunnah* and the ignorance is innovation.

Whoever holds fast on to the *Sunnah* this day, acts upon it, is upright upon it and calls towards it then his reward is more abundant than the reward of the person who proceeded in the beginning of Islam, as the Messenger – the Chosen – peace and mercy be upon him – said, “*For him the reward of fifty.*” So it was said, “[*the reward of*] *fifty from amongst them?*” He said, “*Rather [the reward of fifty] from amongst you.*” Certainly he (pbuh) said that for the one who acts upon his *Sunnah* during the corruption of his nation.

Al-Zuhri said, “*Teaching the Sunnah is better than two hundred years of worship.*”

¹⁷ What is intended by this is: The Author – this is from the humbleness of the scribe

‘Amr bin Muhammad said, “*Abu Mu’aawiyah al-Dareer was relating a report [of the Prophet] to Haaroon al-Raasheed, he narrated to him the report of Abu Hurairah – may Allah be pleased with him – “There was an argument between Adam and Musa.” So ‘Eesaa bin Ja’far said, “How can this be [possible] when there is between Adam and Musa what is between them?” He said [the narrator], So Haaroon leaped at him and said, “He is narrating to you from the Messenger (pbuh) and you are raising objections with the “how?” He did not stop saying [this] until his anger abated.”*”

Like this, it is befitting for a man to magnify the reports of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and encounter them with acceptance, submission and confirmation and rebuke anyone [with] the severest censure who enters upon a course other than the one which Haaroon al-Raasheed followed – may Allah have mercy on him.

[The rebuked are] those who oppose authentic reports, who hear it and objects by asking “the how” of it as a means of denial and leaving it aside, [those] who do not [want to] accept it. It is obligatory to accept everything that came from the Messenger – peace and mercy be upon him and his family.

We hope that Allah (SWT) has made us from those who listen to the sayings and then follows the best of it, and those who hold firmly on to the Book and the *Sunnah* during the period of their lives in the world. [I hope that] He keeps us away from the misleading desires, the fading opinions and the lowly evil-natures, as a favour and a grace from Him.

May the peace and blessing of Allah be upon our master Muhammad, his family and his Companions!¹⁸

¹⁸ *Al-Hamdulillah!* The translation of “*Aqeedat al-Salaf wa Asbaab al-Hadeeth*” by Shaykh Abu ‘Uthmaan Ismaa’eel bin Abd al-Rahmaan al-Saabooneey was completed by the grace of Allah (SWT) on Saturday 18th June 2011 [17th Rajab 1432] in London, UK by His slave in need ‘Abu Yahya’ Jewel Hossain Jalil.